

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Adele Z. Silver

**FROM FONTAINEBLEAU TO THE LOUVRE:
FRENCH DRAWING FROM THE 17TH CENTURY
December 13, 1989 - January 28, 1990**

From Fontainebleau to the Louvre: French Drawing from the Seventeenth Century gathers important drawings from a formative period in French history and culture, when both the nation and its art were creating a Golden Age. The special loan exhibition will have its first showing at The Cleveland Museum of Art from December 13, 1989, to January 28, 1990, and will then travel to the Harvard University Art Museums (February 24 - April 8, 1990) and the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (May 6 - June 17, 1990). Hilliard Goldfarb, curator for European art at the Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, and former assistant curator of prints and drawings at The Cleveland Museum of Art, organized the exhibition and wrote its extensive catalogue.

The 105 drawings chosen for the exhibition are the work of fewer than forty artists, some of them among France's most distinguished--Jacques Callot, Nicolas Poussin, Claude Lorrain, Simon Vouet--and some very little known today outside scholarly circles. Three royal courts--those of the first three Bourbon kings, Henry IV (r. 1589-1610), Louis XIII (r. 1610-1643), and the early reign of Louis XIV (until 1661)--were their patrons. The palaces named in the exhibition title--Fontainebleau, in the forest south of Paris, and the Louvre, the great monument in the heart of Paris--represent the residences of these kings, and evoke changes of spirit and style

over the nearly 75 years the exhibition covers, as French national self-consciousness grew and increasingly focused on Paris.

All the drawings were gathered from North American collections, testifying to the energy and imagination with which collectors have pursued works that are not in the auction spotlight and have gathered treasures of a stature rarely seen outside of France. In these drawings artists experimented with ideas central to the new styles desired by the French court--their spirited initial thought or reflective re-thinking capture the vitality of French art and culture at a glorious time in their history.

The fully illustrated catalogue--109 duotones, 232 pages--divides the drawings into three categories; the first concentrates on artists working at the courts of Fontainebleau and Nancy (the court of the Dukes of Lorraine); the second on French artists in Rome; and the third--and by far the largest--on the ascendancy of Paris. The catalogue is among the first of the Museum's publications supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's challenge grant to encourage in-depth scholarly research by Museum staff; various donors and an important bequest by Katherine Holden Thayer matched the grant in Cleveland. Reflecting the most current international scholarship in this critical period in French art, the catalogue suggests new ideas for consideration and research and is a major contribution to the field. It will be available at the Museum Bookstore for \$30 paper, \$45 hardcover.

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Notable in the exhibition are nine drawings by Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665), the leading artist in the French community in Rome and one of the most influential figures in French art. The Cleveland Museum's Study for Extreme Unction takes as its subject one of the seven sacraments, in a narrative of the death of the Virgin Mary. Drawn on an intimate scale (just under five inches wide and about 8½ inches high), it powerfully conveys a solemn and intense piety. As he does throughout the catalogue, Dr. Goldfarb places the drawing in the evolution of the artist's career, tracing the influences it draws on as well as its impact on his future work. Extreme Unction reflects Poussin's study of Raphael's drawings (three sketches derived from Raphael are on the verso of the drawing), one of the principal sources of Poussin's sober classicism, which shaped French painting during and after his time. The Holy Family, a slightly larger drawing in The Pierpont Morgan Library, is one of several studies Poussin made for the celebrated painting, The Holy Family on the Steps, now in the Cleveland Museum. The Morgan drawing records a critical phase in the development of Poussin's measured composition, which was so significantly influenced by the art of the Italian High Renaissance.

Six drawings by Jacques Callot (1592-1635) include Study of a Rearing Horse, in the National Gallery of Canada, one of about twenty drawings Callot made in Florence between 1615 and 1617, based on famous Italian prints of horses; the aggressive contour strokes of his pen swell and narrow to convey motion and tension. Callot's Study for the Martyrdom of St. Sebastian, from the Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, is probably datable to the 1630s, when the plague devastated Callot's native region of Lorraine in northeastern France, for St. Sebastian is traditionally invoked against the plague. One of several versions of the subject, this one focuses on the setting--Callot adds the Colosseum in Rome--and the placement of figures, massed

and lighted to create tension between the dark foreground of executioners and the isolated, diminutive figure of the saint.

Influences from Italy were a major source of inspiration to French artists, both in Paris and in various regions that became provinces of France. The second important source of artistic style, content, and technique was the Northern tradition, embodied primarily in Flemish artists working in Paris. Another native of Lorraine, Claude Gellée (1600-1682), who carried the name Claude Lorrain, was heir to both the Italian and the Flemish traditions. One of the greatest draftsmen in French art, he developed his graphic style on sketching tours he made of the Roman countryside with Northern European artists also working in Italy. (Like Poussin, Claude lived most of his professional life in Rome.) Among the eleven drawings by Claude in the exhibition, one of the most unusual is Two Frigates--pen and brown ink and wash over graphite markings--from The Art Institute of Chicago. It depicts two ships moving in opposite directions under full sail, a situation one would find normally only at high sea and which Claude would probably never have seen firsthand. Much more characteristic is his Landscape with Cattle, in the Cleveland Museum collection, one of Claude's most celebrated drawings in North America. The subject of the pastoral scene is the emotion evoked by landscape itself. Remarkable for its orchestration of washes and pen and ink to summon the visual experience of the place (probably at a bend in the Tiber River just north of Rome), the drawing exhibits Claude at his most unerring, choosing natural details that merge into a sweeping, ideal landscape vision.

Simon Vouet (1590-1649) became one of the leading artists in Rome while he lived there between 1613 and 1627. His position was further enhanced, and his role as a transmitter of Italian traditions made clear, when he left his post as director of the Roman Academy of San Luca to return to Paris as first painter to King Louis XIII

in 1627. Of the six drawings by Vouet in the exhibition, one is a spectacular preparatory study--bold black chalk heightened with white on blue paper--Creusa Fleeing Troy, in the National Gallery of Art, Washington. A mature work, it shows Vouet's working method: a figure is studied in pose--in this case, the figure of Creusa in the drawing is remarkably close to the pose in the final painting--and portions of the figure (face, hands, etc.) are reexamined in detail on the same sheet. His method can be traced to academic practices in Italian studios, notably the studio of the Carracci, and was incorporated into the training patterns of the Royal Academy in Paris.

Those painters who founded the Royal Academy in 1648, basing it on the Roman academy, included younger talents who built active and successful careers in the service of the court and the city of Paris, such as Laurent de La Hyre (1606-1656) and Charles Le Brun (1619-1690). By mid-century, residence in Rome was becoming less essential for ambitious French artists, and some, such as de La Hyre, never traveled to Italy or, like LeBrun, stayed only briefly. Having been trained in Paris by Vouet, Le Brun spent three years in Rome with Poussin and returned to Paris to be the first painter to Louis XIV and, later, chancellor, then director, of the Royal Academy.

De La Hyre's A Bishop Ministering to the Sick, in the Fogg Art Museum, reflects Italian influences--probably inescapable and irresistible even to an artist who never visited Italy--alongside the lingering influences of the earlier French style associated with the court at Fontainebleau. Le Brun's Study of a Man Clinging to a Rock, in the Crocker Art Museum, is dynamic testimony to the mix of influences--classical, High Renaissance, and the new Baroque currents--from Rome that were integrated into the developing French style. Le Brun's emphasis on contour lines and

three dimensions bespeaks his desire to render accurately the weight and volume of the human figure.

Cardinal Richelieu, who brilliantly guided Louis XIII's expansion and unification of France to its present boundaries, built an important personal collection of Italian Renaissance art and commissioned works from many French artists. He died in 1642, just a few months before Louis XIII, and was succeeded by his pupil, Cardinal Mazarin, who remained as first minister to the young Louis XIV until the Cardinal died in 1661. Mazarin, who completed Richelieu's efforts to centralize power under the monarchy, actively encouraged the influx of Italian art and served as "protector" (honorary head) of the Royal Academy. His successor as minister to Louis XIV, Colbert, was its administrator and reconstituted it to serve royal purposes and power. With its rigorous and highly organized training, the Academy was a mirror image, in the world of the visual arts, of the central and autocratic authority that the French state had achieved by the end of the period to which this exhibition is devoted.

On Wednesday, December 13, at 5:45 pm, Dr. Goldfarb will speak on "Drawing Together: Tracing French Identities in the 17th Century." Gallery talks in the exhibition will be offered by Museum staff during the opening week of the show, on Wednesday, December 13, and Sunday, December 17, and Wednesday, January 17, and Sunday, January 21, at 1:30 pm. This year's annual Holiday Film Festival--a series of films set in 17th-century France planned in conjunction with the exhibition--will be shown from December 26 through December 31, at 1:30 pm. There is no admission charge to the Museum, exhibition, films, or public programs.

The exhibition is organized by The Cleveland Museum of Art. The Cleveland showing is assisted by a grant from the Ohio Arts Council.

For additional information, photographs, color slides, please contact Adele Z. Silver, Public Information, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland OH 44106; 216/421-7340.